

Exhibit 55

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Office of the Director  
Camp Springs, MD 20588-0009



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

May 1, 2025

**DECISION**

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY**

**FROM:** Kika M. Scott **KIKA M SCOTT**  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of Director

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**SUBJECT: Temporary Protected Status for Honduras**

**Recommendation:** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is presenting a recommendation of termination for the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Honduras based on a review of current conditions in Honduras.

**Purpose:** Honduras' existing TPS designation will expire July 5, 2025. At least 60 days before a TPS designation expires, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate U.S. Government agencies, is required to review the conditions in a country designated for TPS to determine whether the conditions supporting the designation continue to be met, and, if so, the length of an extension of the designation.<sup>1</sup> If the Secretary determines that the country no longer meets the statutory conditions for designation, she must terminate the designation.<sup>2</sup> If the Secretary does not make a timely decision about whether the country no longer meets the conditions for TPS designation, the designation is automatically extended for an additional period of at least six months.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, USCIS has completed a review of the conditions in Honduras to inform the consideration of the TPS action and is presenting a recommendation of termination for your consideration.

As part of the review process, USCIS consulted with the Department of State (DOS). In a letter to you dated April 8, 2025, the Secretary of State recommended termination of the TPS designation because "Honduras has recovered sufficiently from the temporary disruption in living conditions that resulted from the environmental disaster caused by Hurricane Mitch in

<sup>1</sup> Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) sec. 244(b)(3)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). *See generally* Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status Legal Authority.

<sup>2</sup> INA sec. 244(b)(3)(B), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(B).

<sup>3</sup> INA sec. 244(b)(3)(C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C).

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1999 such that Honduras can adequately handle the return of its nationals.”<sup>4</sup> For the reasons set forth below, we agree that ample information on the current country conditions in Honduras, including that information showing that Honduras is no longer temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals, supports TPS termination.

Temporary Protected Status, as the name itself makes clear, is an inherently temporary status. TPS designations are time-limited and must be periodically reviewed. The statute inherently contemplates advance notice of a termination by requiring the Secretary to make a decision at least 60 days before the current expiration date and delaying the effective termination date by at least 60 days after publication of a *Federal Register* notice of the termination or, if later, the existing expiration date.<sup>5</sup>

**TPS Overview:** Honduras was initially designated for TPS on January 5, 1999, based on Hurricane Mitch in 1998, that resulted in substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions.<sup>6</sup> The designation had been continuously extended since its initial designation until November 6, 2017, when former Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke announced that additional time was necessary regarding the TPS designation for Honduras. Consequently, she did not make a decision on Honduras’ TPS designation by the statutory deadline, resulting in an automatic 6-month extension of the designation, through July 5, 2018.<sup>7</sup>

In 2018, DHS announced the termination of TPS for Honduras<sup>8</sup> to be effective January 5, 2020, finding that the disruption of living conditions from Hurricane Mitch had decreased and was no longer substantial.<sup>9</sup> However, in response to litigation, DHS announced on May 10, 2019, that it would not implement or enforce the decision to terminate TPS for Honduras. DHS instead continued the validity of TPS-related documentation for Honduran TPS beneficiaries through January 5, 2020.<sup>10</sup> On November 4, 2019, to comply with ongoing litigation, DHS further continued and extended TPS-related documentation for Hondurans through January 4, 2021.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Attachment D: DOS Recommendation on TPS for Honduras.

<sup>5</sup> See INA sec. 244(b)(3), (d)(3); 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3), (d)(3).

<sup>6</sup> *Designation of Honduras Under Temporary Protected Status*, 64 FR 524 (Jan. 5, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> DHS Press Release, *Acting Secretary Elaine Duke Announcement on Temporary Protected Status for Nicaragua and Honduras*, available at: <https://www.dhs.gov/archive/news/2017/11/06/acting-secretary-elaine-duke-announcement-temporary-protected-status-nicaragua-and-honduras>. See also *Extension of the Designation of Honduras for Temporary Protected Status*, 82 FR 59630 (Dec. 15, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> DHS Press Release, *Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen Announcement on Temporary Protected Status for Honduras* (May 4, 2018), available at: <https://www.dhs.gov/archive/news/2018/05/04/secretary-homeland-security-kirstjen-m-nielsen-announcement-temporary-protected-status-honduras>.

<sup>9</sup> *Termination of the Designation of Honduras for Temporary Protected Status*, 83 FR 26074 (June 5, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Pursuant to an order to stay proceedings in *Bhattarai v. Nielsen*, No. 19-cv-00731, pending resolution of related claims being litigated before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in *Ramos v. Nielsen*, No. 18-16981, DHS published a notice that it will not implement or enforce the decision to terminate TPS for Honduras. TPS beneficiaries from Honduras retained TPS, provided that an alien’s TPS status is not withdrawn because of ineligibility. See *Bhattarai v. Nielsen*, No. 19-cv-00731 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 12, 2019); *Ramos v. Nielsen*, 326 F. Supp. 3d 1075 (N.D. Cal. 2018); see also *Continuation of Documentation for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status Designations for Nepal and Honduras*, 84 FR 20647 (May 10, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> To comply with the preliminary injunctions issued in *Ramos v. Nielsen* and *Saget v. Trump* and the order to stay proceedings in *Bhattarai v. Nielsen*. See *Saget v. Trump*, 375 F. Supp. 3d 280 (E.D.N.Y. 2019); *Continuation of Documentation for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status Designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Sudan*, 84 FR 59403 (Nov. 4, 2019).

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While litigation continued, DHS published three additional *Federal Register* Notices (FRNs in 2020,<sup>12</sup> 2021,<sup>13</sup> and 2022<sup>14</sup>) extending the validity of TPS and TPS-related documentation for Honduran beneficiaries. Finally, on June 21, 2023, DHS published a FRN reconsidering and rescinding the prior administration's termination of the Honduras TPS designation. The rescission was effective June 9, 2023, and the new 18-month extension of TPS for Honduras began on January 6, 2024, and will remain in effect through July 5, 2025.<sup>15</sup>

To be eligible for TPS under Honduras' current designation, along with meeting the other eligibility requirements, aliens must have continuously resided in the United States since December 30, 1998, and have been continuously physically present in the United States since January 5, 1999. There are currently approximately 72,300<sup>16</sup> beneficiaries and approximately 1,000<sup>17</sup> pending initial applications under Honduras' TPS designation.<sup>18</sup>

**Description of Country Conditions:** Honduras' current TPS designation is based upon the environmental disaster provision in the TPS statute. That provision requires a determination that (1) Honduras continues to experience an environmental disaster; (2) the disaster is causing a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the affected area; (3) Honduras is unable, temporarily, to adequately handle the return of its nationals; and (4) Honduras officially requested a TPS designation.<sup>19</sup>

USCIS conducted a thorough review of conditions in Honduras. While Hurricane Mitch was a sudden catastrophe that caused severe flooding and associated damage<sup>20</sup> leading to Honduras' TPS designation, the conditions resulting from Hurricane Mitch no longer cause a substantial,

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<sup>12</sup> On December 9, 2020, DHS automatically extended the validity of TPS-related documentation for nine months through October 4, 2021, for Honduran beneficiaries. *Continuation of Documentation for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status Designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras, and Nepal*, 85 FR 79208.

<sup>13</sup> On September 10, 2021, DHS published a notice for a fifteen-month extension of TPS for aliens from Honduras until December 31, 2022, while the preliminary injunction in *Ramos* and the *Bhattarai* orders remain in effect. Extensions were previously set to expire on October 4, 2021. *Continuation of Documentation for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status Designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras, and Nepal*, 86 FR 50725.

<sup>14</sup> On November 16, 2022, DHS published a notice extending the validity period of TPS for covered aliens from several countries, including Honduras through June 30, 2024. *Continuation of Documentation for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status Designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras, and Nepal*, 87 FR 68717.

<sup>15</sup> *Reconsideration and Rescission of Termination of the Designation of Honduras for Temporary Protected Status; Extension of the Temporary Protected Status Designation for Honduras*, 88 FR 40304 (June 21, 2023); see also *Extension of Re-Registration Periods for Extensions of the Temporary Protected Status Designations of El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Sudan*, 88 FR 86665 (Dec. 14, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> Estimate as of April 7, 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Estimate as of April 7, 2025.

<sup>18</sup> The DHS Office of Homeland Security Statistics has estimated that approximately an additional 920,000 nationals of Honduras have entered the United States and could become newly eligible for TPS if Honduras is newly designated. Estimate as of December 4, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> INA sec. 244(b)(1)(B), (b)(3); 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(B), (b)(3).

<sup>20</sup> National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, 25 Years Later: Looking Back at the October Monster Named Mitch (Oct. 27, 2023), available at: <https://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/news/25-years-later-looking-back-the-october-monster-named-mitch> (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

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but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the area affected, and Honduras is no longer temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals. Honduras has made significant progress recovering from the hurricane's destruction and is now a popular tourism<sup>21</sup> and real estate investment destination.<sup>22</sup> The full USCIS reports, upon which this recommendation is based, can be found in Attachments B and C,<sup>23</sup> and a detailed discussion of these improved country conditions follows.

Improvements

Honduras has witnessed significant changes in the 26 years since Hurricane Mitch's destruction. Recent reports indicate that 95.7% of Hondurans have access to a basic water source, 83.8% can access basic sanitation, and 93.2% have access to electricity.<sup>24</sup> The World Bank has been helping Honduras address its most pressing needs and development challenges, including supporting the Honduran government's emergency response and post-disaster reconstruction efforts.<sup>25</sup> With international assistance, Honduras has strengthened its disaster management capacity at the municipal and national levels and has improved its capacity to promptly and effectively respond to emergencies.<sup>26</sup> Following disaster management improvements, 18 municipalities adopted risk management and emergency plans, and 38 cities improved their livability, sustainability, and capacity, benefiting 1.3 million people.<sup>27</sup>

Further, new infrastructure projects are set to transform Honduras and create jobs. Foreign direct investment in Honduras increased to \$1.8 billion USD in 2023, a notable rise from the previous year.<sup>28</sup> Honduras is investing in urban infrastructure, focusing on improving informal settlements and expanding land supply.<sup>29</sup> In January 2025, the Honduran government enacted a plan called "Brother, Come Home," which reportedly includes providing monetary and food support and access to employment programs to support Hondurans deported from the United States.<sup>30</sup> This initiative, along with the improved access to basic services and improvements to

<sup>21</sup> ReportLinker, Honduras Tourism Industry Outlook 2024 – 2028, available at: <https://www.reportlinker.com/cip/country/6226-726310> (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

<sup>22</sup> *Brevitas*, Why Honduras is Gaining Popularity for Real Estate Investment and Airbnb Rentals, Aug. 30, 2024, available at: <https://brevitas.com/articles/2024-8-why-honduras-is-gaining-popularity-for-real-estate-investment-and-airbnb-rentals> (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

<sup>23</sup> See Attachments B and C.

<sup>24</sup> BTI Transformation Index, Honduras, 2024, available at: [https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country\\_report\\_2024\\_HND.pdf](https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_HND.pdf) (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

<sup>25</sup> BTI Transformation Index, Honduras, 2024, available at: [https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country\\_report\\_2024\\_HND.pdf](https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_HND.pdf) (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

<sup>26</sup> World Bank Group, Honduras: Overview, Oct. 7, 2024, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview#3> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

<sup>27</sup> World Bank Group, Honduras: Overview, Oct. 7, 2024, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview#3> (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

<sup>28</sup> The Latin Investor, 14 strong forecasts for real estate in Honduras in 2025, Feb. 6, 2025, available at: <https://thelatininvestor.com/blogs/news/honduras-real-estate-forecasts> (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

<sup>29</sup> The Latin Investor, 14 strong forecasts for real estate in Honduras in 2025, Feb. 6, 2025, available at: <https://thelatininvestor.com/blogs/news/honduras-real-estate-forecasts> (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

<sup>30</sup> The Tico Times, Honduras Prepares for Mass Deportations Under Trump, Jan. 26, 2025, available at: <https://ticoftimes.net/2025-01-26/honduras-prepares-for-mass-deportations-under-trump> (last visited Apr. 14, 2025).

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infrastructure and disaster management, support the analysis that Honduras is able to adequately handle the return of its nationals.

A citizen of a foreign country who wishes to travel to the United States for a temporary stay must first obtain a nonimmigrant visa by showing, in general, an intent to return to their country of residence. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, approximately 78,400 Honduran nationals were issued a nonimmigrant visa.<sup>31</sup>

A number of Honduran nationals located inside the United States have requested advance parole documents (APDs) for travel to Honduras, suggesting that nationals may safely travel there. From October 1, 2023 through April 3, 2025, approximately 7,200 Honduran nationals requested APDs, of which around 2,400 were for intended travel to Honduras (34%).<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is currently removing aliens to Honduras. From June 21, 2023, through March 2, 2025, ICE removed approximately 71,450 aliens to Honduras.<sup>33</sup> This population is roughly equivalent to the current Honduras TPS population, again indicating that Honduras is able to adequately handle the return of its nationals.

Population Estimate

Approximately 920,000 nationals of Honduras could potentially be eligible for TPS if Honduras were to be newly designated.<sup>34</sup> Within this population, approximately 450,000 unauthorized aliens entered the United States before January 1, 2022 (a date that the DHS Office of Homeland Security Statistics [OHSS] uses as a baseline for its estimates). Approximately 20,000 nonimmigrants have overstayed since January 1, 2022. Approximately 300,000 aliens were encountered at a border or port of entry since that date without repatriation or relief, and approximately 120,000 aliens entered the United States irregularly since that date and were not apprehended.<sup>35</sup> Approximately 40,000 nonimmigrants in valid status have entered since January 1, 2018.<sup>36</sup>

**Options:** You may take one of the following actions:

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<sup>31</sup> Estimates as of March 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Estimates as of April 2025. These figures do not necessarily include TPS beneficiaries, who receive a TPS Travel Authorization Document rather than an Advance Parole Document. USCIS does not collect intended destination country from TPS beneficiaries on form I-131, Application for Travel Documents, Parole Documents, and Arrival Departure Records.

<sup>33</sup> Estimates as of March 2025.

<sup>34</sup> Estimate as of December 4, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Although not directly related to the statutory criteria for TPS determinations, DHS records indicate that there are Honduran nationals (or aliens who last habitually resided in Honduras) who are TPS recipients or applicants who are or have been the subject of administrative investigations for fraud, public safety and national security. Of the approximately 72,400 TPS recipients and 1,200 pending applications under TPS for Honduras, there are 18 alien numbers associated with a national security record, 2,195 numbers associated with a fraud record, and 217 numbers associated with a public safety record. One alien number is associated with a known or suspected terrorist (KST) record. Estimates as of April 14, 2025.

<sup>36</sup> Estimate as of December 4, 2024.

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- 1) *Terminate Honduras' Designation for TPS (USCIS recommends this option based on a review of current conditions in Honduras)*
  - If you determine that Honduras no longer continues to meet the statutory requirements for its TPS designation and/or is contrary to the national interest, you must terminate TPS for Honduras. Termination would end TPS benefits for existing Honduran TPS beneficiaries after publication of a notice in the *Federal Register*. Upon the termination of TPS benefits, former beneficiaries without another immigration status or authorization to remain would no longer have permission to work and remain in the United States. They may, however, apply for any other immigration benefits for which they may be otherwise eligible (e.g., asylum, lawful permanent residence).
  - If you decide to terminate Honduras' designation, the effective date of termination may not be earlier than 60 days after the date the *Federal Register* notice announcing the termination is published or, if later, the expiration of the most recent previous extension.
- 2) *No Decision/Automatic Extension*
  - After review of the assessment, you could choose not to make a determination about whether Honduras' TPS designation should be extended or terminated at this time. If you do not make a decision at least 60 days prior to its expiration date, by statute, its period of designation will be automatically extended for 6 additional months (or, in your discretion, a period of 12 or 18 months).
  - Should you choose not to make a decision about whether the conditions supporting Honduras' designation continue to be met, an announcement of the automatic extension via *Federal Register* notice, including information to beneficiaries and employers about continued employment authorization and the period of extension is required. Note that you would then have to review conditions prior to the expiration of that extension.
- 3) *Extend Honduras' Designation for TPS*
  - Under the TPS statute, if you determine that the statutory conditions for designation continue to be met, you must extend the TPS designation for an additional period of 6, 12, or 18 months.<sup>37</sup> Honduras was initially designated for TPS on January 5, 1999, based on an environmental disaster that resulted in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions.
  - Should the decision be made to extend the designation of TPS for Honduras, only existing Honduran TPS beneficiaries may re-register for TPS, and any aliens from Honduras who may have entered the United States after the current continuous residence date will not be eligible for an initial application for TPS.<sup>38</sup>

**Signature Level Justification:** At least 60 days before the expiration of a foreign state's TPS designation or extension, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate U.S. Government agencies, must review the conditions in the foreign state designated for TPS to determine whether

<sup>37</sup> Along with an extension of the TPS designation, the statute also provides that the Secretary may newly designate the country for TPS. See INA sec. 244(b)(1), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1).

<sup>38</sup> In certain circumstances, aliens may apply for TPS for the first time during an extension of the country's TPS designation period. The alien must qualify to file their application late and must independently meet all the TPS eligibility requirements.

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they continue to meet the conditions for the TPS designation.<sup>39</sup> The statute provides that there is no judicial review of any determination with respect to the designation, termination, or extension of a designation.<sup>40</sup>

**Timeliness:** You are required by statute to decide whether to extend or terminate an existing TPS designation at least 60 days before the expiration of the current designation, or the designation is automatically extended for a minimum of 6 months.<sup>41</sup> For Honduras' designation, which expires on July 5, 2025, you must make a decision by May 6, 2025, or the automatic extension occurs. You are further required to provide timely notice of your decision through publication in the *Federal Register*.<sup>42</sup> Your earliest decision will facilitate publication of the *Federal Register* notice, which communicates policy and appropriate procedures for TPS beneficiaries, their employers, and benefit-granting agencies.

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<sup>39</sup> INA sec. 244(b)(3)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A).

<sup>40</sup> INA sec. 244(b)(5)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(5)(A).

<sup>41</sup> See INA sec. 244(b)(3)(A), (C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A), (C).

<sup>42</sup> See INA sec. 244(b)(3)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A).

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**USCIS Recommendation:** USCIS recommends that TPS for Honduras be terminated based on a review of country conditions which demonstrate clearly that Honduras no longer meets the statutory requirements for TPS designation. Honduras has improved significantly from the impacts of Hurricane Mitch, the environmental disaster upon which it has been designated for TPS. As part of the interagency consultation requirement, DOS has made clear they agree with this recommendation.

Further, USCIS recommends that the statutory minimum of 60 days following publication of the FRN for the effective date for the effective date of the termination, as that provides a sufficient period of time for ending what was statutorily intended to be a temporary program.

**Secretary's Decision:**

1. Terminate: Terminate Honduras' designation

Approve/date

2. No Decision/Automatic Extension: Delay a decision on Honduras' designation, resulting in an extension of 6 months

Approve/date \_\_\_\_\_

3. Extend: Extend Honduras' existing designation for 6, 12, or 18 months

Specify duration of extension (6, 12, or 18 months): \_\_\_\_\_

Approve/date \_\_\_\_\_

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Legal Authority, Honduras  
Attachment B: USCIS RAIO Country Conditions Report, Honduras  
Attachment C: USCIS OP&S Country Conditions Report, Honduras  
Attachment D: DOS Recommendation on TPS for Honduras

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